

REMARKS

Claims 2-7, 11, 12, 15-18, 20-25, 29, 30 and 33-69 are pending, with claims 11, 15, 29, 33, 37, 42, 44, and 46 being independent. Claims 42-48, 50 and 52 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 49, 51, and 53 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-7, 11, 12, 15-18, 20-25, 29, 30, 33-41, and 54-69 are allowed. These claims are retained.

Rejection under 35 USC 112

Claims 49, 51, and 53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. These claims have been amended to obviate the rejection. In addition, these claims have been amended to be in independent form and are thus now in condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 USC 103

Claims 42-47 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,462,748 (Fushiki) in view of U.S. Publication No. US2002/0031256 (Hiramatsu), in further view of U.S. Publication No. US2002/0083859 (Hauck). Claims 48, 50, and 52 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No.

6,462,748 (Fushiki), U.S. Publication No. US2002/0031256 (Hiramatsu), U.S. Publication No. US2002/0083859 (Hauck) in view of U.S. Publication No. US2003/0228016 (Shimada).

Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, claims 42-48, 50 and 52 have been canceled to obviate the rejections. The right to pursue this subject matter in a continuation application is expressly reserved.

Conclusion:

The foregoing comments made with respect to the positions taken by the Office are not to be construed as acquiescence with other positions of the Office that have not been explicitly contested. Accordingly, the above arguments for patentability of a claim should not be construed as implying that there are not other valid reasons for patentability of that claim or other claims.

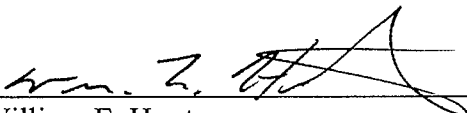
A formal notice of allowance is respectfully requested. In the absence of such, a telephone interview with the Examiner and the Examiner's supervisor is respectfully requested to discuss any issues that remain.

Please apply any necessary charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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